



Evonne M. Klein
Commissioner

Department of Housing

Connecticut
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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY SUBMITTED TO THE VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
2/25/2014**

Evonne Klein, Commissioner
Department of Housing

Senate Bill No. 215

**AN ACT PROVIDING VETERANS' PREFERENCES IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM AND HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECTS**

Senator Leone, Representative Hennessy and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony regarding Senate Bill 215 – AN ACT PROVIDING VETERANS' PREFERENCES IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECTS.

The Department of Housing (DOH) is proud to assist veterans through a variety of its initiatives and programs, including but not limited to: financial support for housing developments that include a preference or set-aside for veterans and prioritizing veterans, who are ineligible for VASH benefits and who are homeless or chronically homeless, in the latest round of funding for permanent supportive housing development projects. Expanding this effort to assist homeless veterans, DOH's upcoming funding round initiative will require each developer who receives financial assistance from the Department to set a preference for veterans for at least one unit in their development. DOH is launching this initiative in the spring with our next Competitive Housing Assistance for Multifamily Properties (CHAMP) funding round.

DOH is also a proud partner in the state's commitment to end veterans' homelessness by 2015. Governor Malloy's legislative initiatives this session will bolster efforts to accomplish this laudable goal. The Governor's initiatives include: enhancing residential options for veterans at the Department of Veterans' Affairs property in Rocky Hill, the Veterans' Employment Opportunity Pilot program, increasing funding for Security Deposit Guarantees and prioritizing veterans, and funding support services for veterans who are residents of the Victory Gardens affordable housing development in Newington. While DOH appreciates that SB 215 was drafted with the same commendable intentions of assisting our nation's heroes, DOH is concerned that it would have unintended consequences to the detriment of individuals and families who are currently on waiting lists for housing assistance. If this bill were to move forward, DOH would appreciate the opportunity to work with Co-Chairs to amend the language, which would provide a similar benefit without the same potential negative impact. Thank you for your time and consideration.